

Argues the United States can spend less and be safer

CHICAGO—Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) delivered an address to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, calling for the United States to rein in its nation's defense budget, and synchronize its foreign policy and military expenditures to more effectively confront the threat of global terrorism.

"It's time to step back, evaluate our global needs and build a military to match those needs—as if we were starting from scratch," said Quigley. "Everything our military does must be measured against the benchmark of 'Do we need this to keep America safe?'"

Quigley highlighted a new report by the Sustainable Defense Taskforce that found the United States could save \$960 billion over the next decade without jeopardizing national security, as well as citing defense experts including Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who believe we can make significant cuts in military spending without sacrificing national security.

Areas of excessive spending, cited by Quigley, include an excessive and unnecessary nuclear arsenal, procurement overruns, troop deployment in Europe and Asia, and individual weapon systems including the F-35 second engine and V-22 Osprey.

Quigley called for a renewed focus on intelligence gathering and homeland security as the most effective ways to keep America safe.

Excerpts from the speech can be found below and the full text of his prepared remarks are [here](#).

“[After 9/11] our country came together with the knowledge that we needed to keep Americans safer and more secure...Unfortunately, we have lost sight of those lessons. Rather than recalibrating our security strategy to fight the non-state actors who attacked us, we continue to spend—and spend—to combat the enemy of another era.”

“We need to decide if we really can afford to be the world’s police. We need to see if military might really ends terrorism, and we need to embrace a foreign policy rooted in diplomacy and restraint.”

“Billion dollar submarines, \$133 million fighter aircraft, and \$2 billion stealth bombers are

amazing testaments to this country's industrial capabilities, but they are costly white elephants in the war against Jihadists with Kalashnikovs and roadside bombs."

"Both parties talk about attacking the deficit by cutting "non-defense discretionary" spending across the board, but defense spending accounts for 65 percent of discretionary spending increases since 2001. If we're serious about cutting the deficit, there can be no distinctions like N.D.D."

"We could cut our defense spending in half and still be spending more than our current and potential adversaries combined."

"The military assets most useful for counterterrorism are relatively inexpensive—surveillance technologies, special operations forces and drones."

"America's unparalleled capacity and flexibility to rapidly deploy troops and assets to regions as needed...means the U.S. no longer needs to maintain nearly as many permanent U.S. bases and troops abroad. Simply put, we can maintain global reach without the expense of global presence."

“With finite resources must come choices. The real ramification of overspending on defense is not simply that we will have too many unnecessary ships, aircrafts or missiles, but that by diverting too many of our resources to defense we are neglecting other vital, domestic investments such as health care, education, and infrastructure needed to remain a superpower.”